



Background Briefing Memo NPRM on Expanding Consumers' Video Navigation Choices (FCC 16-42) March 2016

In February 2016, the FCC released a Notice of Proposed Rule Making (FCC 16-42) on Set Top Boxes. The goal of the proceeding is to expand consumer choices for devices used to connect to multichannel video systems such as cable. ***Because of the potential impacts of the proceeding, we advise PEG channels and local governments to be involved in the proceeding.***

The NPRM proposes to set standards for competitive devices to ensure that consumers have the ability to find multichannel content without having to lease a set-top box, including ensuring standards for finding content, delivering video and providing security to protect rights agreements, cable companies and consumers.

A key concern for PEG channels is ensuring consumers can find local programs through channel guides and search functions on cable systems. The Alliance for Community Media believes video channels and program producers must have necessary program information transmitted to viewers to ensure that channels and programs can be seen. As the FCC considers this matter, it must ensure that local program information is made available to all cable consumers. Further, this program information is not a cable company's speech, and the FCC should act to ensure that local program information can be found by cable viewers.

Another concern raised in the proceeding is the question of the definition of an MVPD. Much as in earlier proceedings, local governments and PEG channels should be concerned the FCC does not redefine MVPDs to even further decrease franchise fee revenue and PEG channel distribution.

We expect comment and reply deadlines soon in the proceeding and will be assisting organizations that wish to be involved in the matter.

The Alliance for Community Media wants to keep you and others in your organization updated on significant issues affecting PEG. For further information, please contact Mike Wassenaar, President & CEO at mwassenaar@allcommunitymedia.org.